

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 /044 W

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R 061240Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3941

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T BEIRUT 2159

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR LE SY

SUBJ: SITUATION IN LEBANON: VIEWS OF WALID JUNBLATT

1. HAD RELAXED CONVERSATION ON LOCAL SITUATION WITH WALID JUMBLATT AT CARLTON HOTEL MAY 5. HE COMPLAINED ABOUT THE ENDLESS CONVERSATIONS WITH POLITICIANS AND ASKED ME FOR MY FRANK ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL PROSPECTS. I SAID I CONTINUED TO BE OPTIMISTIC AS TO THE LONG TERM, BUT LEBANON HAD A DIFFICULT PERIOD TO GET THROUGH. WHAT STRUCK ME IN MY CONVERSATIONS WITH BOTH MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS WERE THEIR LACK OF CONTACT AND THEIR MUTUAL INCOMPREHENSION. A GREAT EFFORT NEEDED TO BE MADE IN THE DIRECTION OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. HE ASKED IF I THOUGHT RECONCILIATION WAS POSSIBLE AND I SAID IT HAD TO BE, BECAUSE OTHERWISE THERE WOULD BE NO SOLUTION.

2. JUMBLATT THEN ASKED ME WHAT I WOULD DO IN HIS CIRCUMSTANCES. I SAID I WOULD CONTINUE TO DO AS HE HAD DONE ALREADY, BUT BE VERY CAREFUL AND AVOID ANY HASTY DECISIONS ABOUT ANYTHING. HE SAID THERE WERE SO MANY UNKNOWNNS IT WAS DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHAT TO DO. THE BIGGEST UNKNOWN AT PRESENT WAS THE SYRIANS. WHAT

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COULD I TELL HIM ABOUT THEIR INTENTIONS? I SAID WE HAD POSED SAME QUESTION TO OURSELVES AND HAD CONCLUDED THAT THEY HAD NO TERRITORIAL DESIGNS BUT WOULD LIKE TO MAINTAIN POLITICAL INFLUENCE HERE, EITHER THROUGH THE BAATH PARTY OR OTHERWISE. WE GATHERED MANY LEBANESE WERE DISTURBED BY THIS PROSPECT, WHICH SHOULD HIGHLIGHT THE DESIRABILITY OF WORKING TOWARDS A

POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING SO THE SYRIANS CULD LEAVE.  
WE HAD THE IMPRESSION THEY DID NOT WANT TO KEEP THEIR  
TROOPS HERE A DAY LONGER THAN NECESSARY.

3. JUMBLATT SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE SYRIANS WERE  
INDIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS FATHER'S DEATH AND THIS  
WAS A VERY BITTER FACT FOR HIM, HE WAS TRYING TO RISE  
ABOVE PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSUME HIS NATIONAL  
RESPONSIBILITIES, BUT HE REALLY WAS NOT SURE HOW  
HE SHOULD APPROACH PROBLEM. SYRIAN INTENTIONS WERE  
A MAJOR PREOCCUPATION. SYRIANS APPEARED DESIRE  
POLITICAL ANNEXATION (MAINMISE) OF LEBANON, BUT  
THEY HAD LITTLE SUPPORT HERE. THEY HAD ENTERED  
COUNTRY IN AGREEMENT WITH MARONITES AND GOL,  
BOTH OF WHOM NOW HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS. AT THE  
MEMORIAL CEREMONY FOR HIS FATHER THE LACK OF  
RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN SPEAKER ABDULLAH AHMED  
WAS REMARKABLE. THERE WAS THE MINIMUM OF POLITE  
APPLAUSE AT THE END, BUT WHEN, FOR INSTANCE, HE  
MENTIONED THE NAME OF HAFEZ AL-ASAD, WHICH  
ACCORDING TO USAGE SHOULD HAVE ELICITED A ROUND OF  
APPLAUSE, EVERYONE SAT SILENTLY. THE SYRIANS WERE  
NOT POPULAR. HE HAD SUBSEQUENTLY TALKED TO  
ABDULLAH AHMED, WHO VENTURED ONLY PLATITUDES AND  
GAVE NO MEANINGFUL RESPONSES TO HIS QUESTIONS. HE  
DID NOT TRUST SYRIANS.

4. COMMENT: LIKE FATHER LIKE SON. SUSPECT THAT  
WHAT WALID IS REALLY TURNING OVER IN HIS MIND IS  
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WHETHER TO GO TO DAMASCUS AND MEET ASAD. IN ANY  
EVENT, HE IS A VERY YOUNG MAN WITH VERY HEAVY  
RESPONSIBILTIES FOR WHICH HE HAS NOT BEEN WELL  
PREPARED. HE IS A SYMPATHETIC CHARACTER WHO IS  
APPARENTLY OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS OR INFORMATION WE  
MAY CARE TO PASS ON TO HIM. HE SEEMS CONSIDERABLY  
LESS SUSPICIOUS THAN HIS FATHER WAS IN THIS RESPECT.  
PARKER

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NNN

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**Subject:** SITUATION IN LEBANON: VIEWS OF WALID JUNBLATT  
**TAGS:** PFOR, LE, SY, (JUNBLATT, WALID)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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